

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MASERU

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O.11652: NA

TAGS: PINT SF

SUBJECT: BLACK ATTITUDES: BUTHELEZI'S BID FOR NATIONAL
LEADERSHIP OF BLACKS

REF: PRETORIA 5912, CAPE TOWN 054

1. THERE FOLLOWS A SUMMARY OF A MUCH MORE DETAILED AIRGRAM

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ON SUBJECT SCHEDULED TO REACH DEPT JAN 25. MESSAGE ANALYZES
THE ARTICULATION OF POSITION OF ONE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MOST
PEOMINENT BLACK LEADERS WHOSE VIEWS ARE SHARED BY MANY BLACKS,
ESPECIALLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY AMONG THE ZULU POPULATIONS IN
NATAL AND KWAZULU. AIRGRAM AND CABLE HAVE BEEN COORDINATED
WITH EMBASSY.

2. SUMMARY: DURING 1976 CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI OF KWAZULU LAUNCHED A SUSTAINED BID TO ACHIEVE A POSITION OF PREDOMINANCE AMONG BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERS. STRESSING THEMES OF MAJORITY RULE AND BLACK UNITY, BUTHELEZI IN OVER 25 PUBLIC SPEECHES THRUST HIMSELF FORWARD AS THE MOST READILY OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF THE SAG AMONG BLACK LEADERS WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA. HIS DRIVE FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP -- FOCUSSED ON ORGANIZATION OF BLACK CONSTITUENCIES SUCH AS INKATHA AND THE BLACK UNITY FRONT (BUF) -- ENJOYED PARTIAL SUCCESS BUT IN SOME CASES ALSO MET REJECTION BY BLACKS WHO REGARD HOMELANDS PERSONALITIES AS IRRELEVANT TO THEIR ASPIRATIONS. BUTHELEZI'S CAMPAIGN MAY FOCUS MORE HEAVILY ON THE BUF IN 1977, DURING WHICH INCREASED FRUSTRATION AND A NEED TO APPEAL TO YOUNGER BLACKS COULD FORCE BUTHELEZI TO ADOPT INCREASINGLY RADICAL POSITIONS AND SKATE CLOSER TO THE EDGE OF WHITE TOLERANCE. A TENDENCY TO BE CRITICAL OF U.S. POLICIES TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA, NOTED IN HIS SPEECHES IN 1976, MAY CONTINUE.

END SUMMARY

3. 1976 MARKED A MILESTONE IN THE POLITICAL CAREER OF KWAZULU CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI - A YEAR IN WHICH HE LAUNCHED A SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN TO ACHIEVE A PREDOMINANT POSITION AMONG SOUTH AFRICA'S BLACK LEADERS. SPURRED BOTH BY GREATER CONFIDENCE THAT BLACKS THEMSELVES POSSESSED THE POWER TO EFFECT CHANGE IN SA, AND GREATER FRUSTRATION WITH THE SAG, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE 1976 VIOLENCE IN SOWETO AND ELSEWHERE, BUTHELEZI EMBARKED ON A DYNAMIC CAMPAIGN OF PUBLIC APPEAL. IN OVER 25 SET-PIECE SPEECHES AND NUMEROUS PRESS STATEMENTS CHARACTERIZED BY A PROGRESSIVELY SHARPER RHETORICAL STYLE, BUTHELEZI THRUST HIMSELF FORWARD AS THE MOST PUBLICLY OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF THE SAG

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AMONG BLACK LEADERS WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA. PRINCIPAL THEMES ADVOCATED DURING THE YEAR WERE:

A. MAJORITY RULE. IN 1976 BUTHELEZI FOR THE FIRST TIME EMBRACED THE CONCEPT OF MAJORITY RULE FOR SOUTH AFRICA, I.E. A NEW UNITARY STATE AS THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR ADDRESSING SA'S PROBLEMS. WHILE HE MADE OCCASIONAL REFERENCE TO HIS EARLIER "FEDERAL" PROPOSALS AND ATTEMPTED TO SOFTEN THE IMPACT OF HIS POSITION BY HOPING THAT ANY FUTURE "OPERATIVE MAJORITY" WOULD BE MULTI-RACIAL, THE UNAVOIDABILITY OF AFRICAN RULE WAS A CENTRAL PREMISE RUNNING THROUGH BUTHELEZI'S 1976 SPEECHES.

B. BLACK UNITY AND SELF-RELIANCE. BUTHELEZI THROUGHOUT 1976 REITERATED THE CONVICTION THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S STATUS QUO EXISTS ONLY "ON THE BORROWED TIME OF BLACK DISUNITY" AND THAT THE CREATION OF BLACK UNITY WAS THE ONLY PREREQUISITE TO OVERTURNING THE SA SYSTEM. BUTHELEZI'S VIEW WAS BACKED UP THROUGHOUT THE YEAR BY AN INTENSE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT TO CREATE GREATER BLACK UNITY (SEE BELOW).

C. NON-VIOLENCE. THOUGH BUTHELEZI'S 1976 SPEECHES WERE PROGRESSIVELY MORE CRITICAL OF THE SAG, HE STEADFASTLY CALLED FOR NON-VIOLENT SOLUTIONS TO SA'S PROBLEMS. HIS LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE VIOLENT SOWETO PERIOD WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF INCIDENTS EXPERIENCED IN NATAL AND KWAZULU COMPARED TO SOWETO AND THE CAPE. SPECIFICALLY, HE URGED THAT EFFORTS BE PUT INTO ORGANIZING BLACK CONSTITUENCIES RATHER THAN DEMONSTRATING OR RIOTING, AND THAT SCHOOL CHILDREN EXPLOIT THEIR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES RATHER THAN BURN THEIR SCHOOLS.

4. POLITICAL TACTICS. PUSHING THE CONCEPT THAT BLACK UNITY COULD ONLY BE CREATED THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF "BLACK CONSTITUENCIES", BUTHELEZI IN 1976 PUT MAJOR EFFORTS INTO THE ORGANIZATION OF TWO BODIES:

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A. INKATHA. ORIGINALLY AND PROBABLY STILL LARGELY A ZULU CULTURAL/POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, BUTHELEZI IN 1976 ATTEMPTED TO RECAST INKATHA AS A PARTY OF RELEVANCE AND OPEN TO ALL SA BLACKS, USING IT AS A SPRINGBOARD TO FORMULATION OF AN SA-WIDE BLACK POLITICAL MOVEMENT. SOLIDLY ENTRENCHED IN NATAL AND KWAZULU, IT IS AS YET UNCLEAR WHETHER INKATHA CAN ESTABLISH A WIDE APPEAL AMONG NON-ZULUS ELSEWHERE IN SOUTH AFRICA. THAT LEADERSHIP WITHIN INKATHA IS STILL RESERVED TO KWAZULU'S WELL-DISCIPLINED POLITICAL LEADERS IS EXPLAINED AS NECESSARY TO GIVE THE ORGANIZATION PROTECTION FROM INTERVENTION BY PRETORIA THROUGH OPPOSITION POLITICS AND INSERTION OF "PUPPETS".

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B. BLACK UNITY FRONT. THOUGH INKATHA REPRESENTS BUTHELEZI'S PRIMARY POWER BASE, HE SOUGHT IN 1976 TO PROJECT HIS LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE MORE BROADLY-BASED BUF OF WHICH HE WAS A PRIME ORGANIZER. THIS MOVEMENT'S OBJECTIVES ALIGN WITH MOST OF BUTHELEZI'S OWN, VIZ: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL (AND HOMELANDS) BLACKS, FORMING A UNITED AND DISCIPLINED BLACK COMMUNITY, AND DEVELOPING STRONG LEADERSHIP FOR THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. THE FUTURE OF BUF AT THIS POINT IS PROBLEMATIC AS IT HAS BEEN REJECTED BY SOME BLACK ELEMENTS, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUNG, WHO REGARD HOMELANDS PERSONALITIES SUCH AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUTHELEZI AS PART OF THE SYSTEM AND THEREFORE AS "IRRELEVANT AND UNACCEPTABLE AS TRUE LEADERS OF BLACKS".

C. WHITE POLITICS. FOREGOING EARLIER PRACTICE, BUTHELEZI IN 1976 INJECTED HIMSELF SQUARELY INTO WHITE POLITICS BY CALLING ON WHITES TO REEXAMINE THEIR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. LATE IN THE YEAR HE ADVANCED A PROPOSAL FOR A "SHADOW MULTI-RACIAL BODY" IN WHICH INKATHA COULD MEET WITH WHITE OPPOSITION PARTIES TO DISCUSS ALIGNMENT OF PARTY BLUEPRINTS IN COMMON DIRECTIONS.

5. POLITICAL ATTITUDES. BUTHELEZI'S 1976 PRONOUNCEMENTS REVEALED SEVERAL ATTITUDINAL TRENDS:

A. FOREIGN INVESTMENT. BUTHELEZI'S POSITION IS THAT WHILE HE STILL CANNOT BRING HIMSELF TO CALL FOR CESSATION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN SA, HE INCREASINGLY IS UNABLE TO SUPPORT AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM WHICH POLARIZES WEALTH ALONG RACIAL LINES. WITH DR. BEYERS NAUDE OF THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE, BUTHELEZI PUBLICLY TOOK THE POSITION THAT IF THE HOMELANDS

WERE DESIGNED ONLY TO MAINTAIN THE WHITE CASH ECONOMY, THEN FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE CENTRAL ECONOMY WAS DEVOID OF MORALITY.

B. RELATIONS WITH OTHER BLACK POLITICAL GROUPS. BUTHELEZI PN 1976 ATTEMPTED TO REACH OUT TO GROUPS CRITICAL OF HIM SUCH AS THE ANC, PAC, BLACK PEOPLES CONVENTION AND SOWETO STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, AND TO SEEK THEIR RECOGNITION OF THE POLITICAL VITALITY OF BODIES SUCH AS INKATHA. THESE EFFORTS WERE NOT DEMONSTRABLY SUCCESSFUL AND AT TIMES BUTHELEZI ACTED IRRITABLY IN NOTING THE BLACK GROUPS' LACK OF RESPONSE.

C. ATTITUDE TOWARD U.S. A FEATURE OF BUTHELEZI'S 1976 SPEECHMAKING WAS A WILLINGNESS TO BE OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL OF U.S. POLICIES AND INITIATIVES. HE PUBLICLY CONDEMNED THE KISSINGER/VORSTER DISCUSSIONS FOR FAILING TO CONSULT BLACKS AND EXPRESSED PUBLIC DOUBT THAT AMERICA WAS AT ONE WITH BLACKS IN THEIR LIBERATION STRUGGLE. ON A U.S. VISIT IN OCTOBER, BUTHELEZI LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPEALED TO AMERICAN BLACKS TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE USG TO CORRECT ITS APPROACH. IN PUBLIC BUTHELEZI CRITICIZED AMERICAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERTS FOR POOR ADVICE AFFORDED SECRETARY KISSINGER; CONVERSELY HIS PRIVATE CONTACTS WITH U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL WERE AS CORDIAL AS TRADITIONALLY IN THE PAST THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN.

6. CONCLUSION. AT END-1976, CHIEF BUTHELEZI OCCUPIES A PARADOXICAL POSITION: CONTINUED EMERGENCE AS ONE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MOST PROMINENT AND VOCAL BLACK LEADERS HAS YET TO BRING CONCOMMITANT ACCEPTANCE OF HIS RELEVANCY TO BLACK ASPIRATIONS NATION-WIDE. SOMEWHAT IRONICALLY, THE SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION OF ONE BLACK CONSTITUENCY - ZULU-BASED INKATHA WHICH UNDERSCORES BUTHELEZI'S IDENTITY AS A "HOMELANDS" PERSONALITY - IS A FACTOR IMPEDING HIS CAMPAIGN FOR WIDER RECOGNITION AMONG BLACKS. THE BLACK UNITY FRONT PROVIDES AN ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH BUTHELEZI IS SEEKING TO WIDEN HIS LEADERSHIP APPEAL; PREDICTABLY HE WILL MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT WITH BUF DURING 1977. THE SIMULTANEOUS RELIANCE HE MUST PLACE ON HIS ACTUAL POWER BASE - KWAZULU AND INKATHA - HOWEVER MAY CONTINUE TO COMPLICATE HIS DRIVER FOR GREATER NATIONAL STATURE.

6. BUTHELEZI SINCERELY BELIEVES THAT THE CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA IS DEFINITIVE AND THAT CHANCES FOR ACHIEVING MORE FAVORABLE, NON-VIOLENT SOLUTIONS REST BETTER WITH LEADERS SUCH AS HIMSELF THAN WITH THOSE IN THE UPCOMING GENERATION. THESE MOTIVATIONS WILL IMPEL HIM TO CONTINUE HIS CAMPAIGN IN 1977, SPEAKING OUT ARDENTLY IN ESPOUSAL OF BLACK UNITY (OF WHICH HE WOULD HOPE TO BECOME THE MAIN FOCAL POINT). HIS QUEST FOR A PREDOMINANT POSITION AMONG BLACKS AND FRUSTRATIONS

CAUSED BOTH BY THE SAG AND HIS BLACK RIVALS MAY INFLUENCE
HIM TO RESORT TO MORE RADICAL THEMES TO INCREASE HIS APPEAL
WITH TARGET GROUPS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY. HE MAY ALSO
SKATE CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE THIN EDGE OF WHITE TOLERANCE,
RUNNING THE RISK OF BANNING (THOUGH PROBABLY NOT DETENTION)
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BY THE SAG. (INDEED, MARTYRDOM OF THIS TYPE MAY BE THE ONLY
WAY OF FINALLY SATISFYING CERTAIN OF HIS CRITICS.)
IN THE YEAR AHEAD, BUTHELEZI MAY ALSO FEEL IT NECESSARY TO INDULGE
IN FURTHER CRITICISM OF THE 7U.S. PARTLY IN LINE WITH HIS
IMAGE-BUILDING CAMPAIGN AMONG BLACKS. HIS POSITION AMONG
RIVAL BLACK LEADERS MAY OR MAY NOT EXPAND IN THE YEAR AHEAD BUT
THAT ATTAINED TO DATE MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ANY ASSESS-
MENT OF FUTURE SA BLACK LEADERS. CERTAINLY OF SUCH LEADERS
NOT BANNED OR IN EXILE, THERE IS NO THER BETTER ABLE TO
ARTICULATE BLACK ASPIRATIONS FROM SO MANY PLATFORMS -- AND
NONE WITH THE LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BACKING BUTHELEZI
CURRENTLY ENJOYS.
FARBER

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